

# NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

## CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

### FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 384

#### DEFINITION

Treating woody plant residues created during forestry, agroforestry and horticultural activities to achieve management objectives.

#### PURPOSE

- Reduce hazardous fuels
- Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease
- Protect/maintain air quality by reducing the risk of wildfire
- Improve access to forage for grazing and browsing animals
- Enhance aesthetics
- Reduce the risk of harm to humans and livestock
- Improve the soil organic matter
- Improve the site for natural or artificial regeneration.
- ***Treat slash associated with forest harvest operations***
- ***Create wildlife habitat***

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas with quantities of woody slash and debris requiring treatment.

#### CRITERIA

##### General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Slash treatment and the condition and extent of residual slash shall be planned and the method selected based on purpose(s).

Slash treatment methods (i.e. burning, chipping, lop and scatter, removal, crushing, stacking, piling) will achieve landowner objectives while adequately protecting land and water resources.

Care shall be taken to minimize injury to or function of the residual plant communities.

Timing of treatment shall coincide with intended purpose(s) and minimize impact on other resources.

Slash and debris left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental, or pest hazard. Such remaining material will not interfere with the intended purpose or other management activities.

***Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation (including harvesting activities) and maintenance of this practice.***

##### Additional Criteria Applicable to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Reduce the amount of fuels to an acceptable level by controlling height, size, amount and distribution.

##### Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harmful Insects and Disease

Degree, intensity and timing of treatment shall take full advantage of harmful insect or disease characteristics to enhance the effectiveness of control.

Comply with Pest Management - 595

##### Additional Criteria to Protect/Maintain Air Quality by Reducing the Risk of Wildfire

Activities will be consistent with established regulations and guidelines for PM10 and PM 2.5 emissions, ozone precursors (NOx and VOCs),

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Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#), or download it from the electronic [Field Office Technical Guide](#) for your state.

**S, WV**  
**May 2006**

as well as smoke and fugitive dust, and state and local permit requirements.

When feasible, use chipping, shredding, bio-fuel composting, or other technique in lieu of burning.

#### **Additional Criteria to Improve Access to Forage for Grazing and Browsing Animals**

Slash shall be piled or removed sufficiently to allow access to forage by the site's livestock and to maximize forage growth.

#### **Additional Criteria to Enhance Aesthetics**

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for aesthetics and visual resources.

#### **Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harm to Humans and Livestock**

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for safe use of the area.

#### **Additional Criteria to Improve Soil Organic Matter**

Slash will be of a size and closeness to soil to accelerate in decomposition.

#### **Additional Criteria to Improve the Site for Natural or Artificial Regeneration**

Slash will be treated to complement treatments specified **Forest** Site Preparation - 490.

#### **Additional Criteria for the Treatment of Slash Associated with Forest Harvest Operations**

***All slash created from forest harvest operations will be treated in the following manner:***

***Directional felling should be used to minimize stream disturbance. Felled tops will be pulled from all perennial and intermittent stream channels in accordance with West Virginia Silvicultural Best Management Practices for Controlling Soil Erosion and Sedimentation from Logging Operations.***

<http://www.wvforestry.com/BMP%20Book%20Complete.pdf>

#### **Additional Criteria to Create Wildlife Habitat**

***Removal and/or utilization of slash following timber harvest may provide excellent temporary wildlife cover where there is a lack and need for early successional habitat. Refer to the WV conservation practice (645) Upland Wildlife Habitat Management and the West Virginia Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Technique (WVWHET) for wildlife species that may benefit from this type of habitat.***

***Slash may be piled, windrowed, stacked or placed to provide a transitional edge effect, escape cover or ecotone by the creation of brush piles. Refer to the WV conservation practice standard (647) Early Successional Habitat Development/Management for more information.***

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

When determining method and timing of slash treatment consider air quality regulations, burning requirements, available resources, ability to use woody biomass and regeneration needs.

Consider wildlife needs when performing and timing treatment.

Consider the beneficial and other effects on cultural resources, and threatened and endangered species, natural areas, and wetlands.

***Consider leaving slash on the site following harvest operations to impede deer browsing of natural regeneration.***

#### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

***The following will be identified (as appropriate):***

- ***Purpose of the practice***

- ***Area affected***
- ***Field location / Plan view***
- ***Method of slash treatment***
- ***Any required permits, including but limited to, the CPA-052 or similar environmental documentation.***
- ***Operation and maintenance requirements***

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

***The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life.***

***These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance).***

***The treatment area should be inspected at least annually.***

Monitor populations and the potential of damage to site resources by harmful pests and take controlling actions as necessary. Comply with Pest Management - 595.

Access by vehicles or people will be controlled during treatment for safety. Comply with Use Exclusion - 472.

### ***References***

***West Virginia Silvicultural Best Management Practices for Controlling Soil Erosion and Sedimentation from Logging Operations***

***NOTE: Bold italic indicates information added to the national standard by West Virginia.***